

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 001320

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SCE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/10/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: CROATIA SEEKS COOPERATION WITH U.S. ON REGIONAL ISSUES

Classified By: CDA Greg Delawie for reasons 1.4 b/d.

1. (C) Summary: MFA State Secretary Hidajet Biscevic called in Charge on August 9 to preview a GOC non-paper outlining a framework for U.S.-Croatian cooperation in South East Europe over the next two years. Biscevic cited the resolution of the Kosovo question, the future of the Serbia-Montenegro union and the tenth anniversary of Dayton with consequent rethinking on making Bosnia truly self-sufficient as the key regional issues in the coming years that an increasingly introspective EU will be unable to confront alone. The GOC believes that a strong U.S. role is essential to prevent backsliding from the common goal of integrating all states in the region into Euro-Atlantic structures and would like to position Croatia as a facilitator in this process, in cooperation with the U.S. In this role, Croatia would avoid seeing its Euro-Atlantic ambitions subordinated to the progress of its neighbors. Biscevic hopes to have bilateral discussions on these issues in the fall. End Summary.

2. (C) Charge met with Croatian MFA State Secretary Hidajet Biscevic at the latter's request on August 9. Biscevic called the meeting to present a GOC non-paper (e-mailed to EUR/SCE) setting out a framework for Croatian-U.S. relations over the next two years. Biscevic cited several issues where the GOC sees room for close cooperation with the U.S. in the region:

- Resolution of Kosovo status, where Croatia could act as a consultant or special envoy for the Contact Group;
- Future of Serbia-Montenegro union, with continued work on resolving open disputes and assisting with rule of law issues;
- Adjustments to Dayton to move Bosnia toward greater self-sufficiency, where Croatia could serve as a conduit for investment and economic development;
- Assisting Macedonia in its own NATO and EU bids.

3. (C) Biscevic indicated that the GOC had made similar proposals to the EU in advance of its March 05 decision on whether or not to begin accession negotiations with Croatia. However, he felt that the EU was now too self-absorbed with its own internal issues and the fallout from the negative votes on its constitution and digesting its recent enlargement to tackle these issues effectively. He expressed concern that a leadership vacuum could threaten much of the progress that has been made in the region since the 90s and possibly lead to backsliding. Biscevic said that U.S. engagement remains essential to ensure that South East Europe stays on the course of Euro-Atlantic integration and does not siphon U.S. resources from the war on terrorism and other global issues.

4. (C) In the context of furthering stability in South East Europe, Biscevic noted that Croatia hopes to act as facilitator in this process and, in so doing, ensure that its own EU and NATO ambitions are not linked to those of its neighbors. Croatia considers itself much further along the path toward both EU and NATO membership than its southern neighbors and so considers that it can burnish its Euro-Atlantic credentials while offering assistance in regional stability and development.

5. (C) Biscevic expressed the hope that this non-paper could form the basis for further bilateral discussions on these questions this fall.

6. (C) Charge noted the U.S. shared the goal of seeing Croatia integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures and avoiding any backsliding in the region to the problems of the 90s. He told Biscevic that, as far as the NATO Membership Action Plan is concerned, the U.S. view is that each candidate will be judged based on its own progress in meeting the specific requirements of membership.

DELAWIE

NNNN